

Out of the Mist

Manx Grand Prix Riders' Assoc. August 2005

Chairman's Report

Jim Hunter

What was TT '05 like? For me it was a whole life times worth of experiences all condensed into a two week period. It had low points but some massive highs. The whole event seems to have stepped up a gear, noticeable for the increase in depth of quality in the field and staggering speeds being achieved by so many riders. For the Senior TT, I was stationed at the Guthrie Memorial and I counted 75 bikes past me on the first lap – that's almost twice as many as a Senior race I remember a few years ago. I hear the arguments of those who say that the races were repetitive to watch, but you can't dispute the fact that the quality of machinery is now much more like you'd expect for an International meeting. It was also noteworthy that four different manufacturers and six different riders took race wins. Having finally found the time to read all the TT reviews that reported on this year's event the comment that sticks in my mind was made by the Stobart Honda team owner Paul Bird in Irish Racer magazine "I'd say there was a good chance that you'll see me and my team back there as I was very impressed" he commented. That must be a sign that things are heading in the right direction mustn't it?

Sure enough, with the TT and Southern 100 already been and gone for another year, attentions are starting to turn towards the Manx. Congratulations to the Southern 100 Club on their successful 50th Anniversary meeting. The racing was really thrilling to watch, particularly the battles between Ian Lougher and Guy Martin. You just can't help but admire the courage of all the riders and the silky precision with which the meetings down at the Billown circuit are run. Things seem to be shaping up really nicely for the Manx with all classes being well supported. Notable entries include Chris Palmer, Scott Richardson, Richard Britton, Andy Russell and Martin Hewlett. It will be interesting to see how Scott goes, with this being his first ride on the Mountain circuit since his big get off at Ballaspur a few years ago. Good luck Scott!

A big thank you to all the members who have signed up to receive the newsletter via e-mail (getting close to 100 now) and everybody who has submitted news for inclusion in this edition. Don't forget to come along to the AGM on Sunday August 28th if you are over for the races and then join us afterwards for our get together in the beer tent. As those of you who regularly attend already know, drinks and a light buffet are laid on. New for this year will be the presentation of the "Spirit of the Manx" award and the prize draw for riders – first prize a boat ticket for a van and driver for the 2006 Manx (Courtesy of the Steam Packet). If you are a rider and you're name is pulled out of the hat and you're not there, the prize will go to somebody else. You don't have to be a member to attend, but what I'm hoping for of course is that

Newcomers A. Keith Stewart. 108.01mph



Newcomers C. Brian Purdy. 98.23mph



everybody will be so impressed by the fantastic time they've had, they will just join anyway.

If you are competing at this years event I'd like to finish by wishing you the very best of luck, a safe, enjoyable and rewarding meeting. As Ron Roebury used to say to me as a parting shot before I left for a race "Keep it on the rubber"!

Jim Hunter


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Keith Trubshaw

Who was reading the May issue of "Out of the Mist" well then ? ? ? I did my usual "Road Report" which I am sad to say had a mistake in it. Well there are probably more but this is the one I will confess to !!! I said that after the end of the Cronky Voddy on the first **left** there was new surface, well the first corner and the one with the new tarmac is a **right**. Never mind I am confident that no body will have actually peeled left into the field. I was talking to Les Bibby at the July Aintree meeting. He has not raced here, or visited for years and yet he could still list corner after corner through whole sections, but I suppose many of you still do that before you go to sleep at night!!! Les's last race in the Island was in the mid seventies. He had a really dramatic fall at Rhencullen. Les flew straight into the end of the cottage on the right side of the road. His bike suddenly had a dramatic shortening of the wheelbase but amazingly Les rolled off the machine to the left in mid air and broke his leg as he skimmed the front of the cottage demolishing the porch over the door as he passed. Again it just goes to show that his number was not up on that day, I am a great believer in fate !!!

I really enjoyed the TT after a years lay off from Travelling Marshal duties because of unfortunately setting fire to my hand last year. The Honda Fireblade was phenomenal, really smooth power delivery and very fast. In fact a lot faster than my very own DT175 Trail Bike, would you believe !! My son, Richard started marshalling this year and has picked the flat out left before Glen Helen 1 to reside. After one lunch break I was going to Guthries for the afternoon race. I thought will I embarrass him if I took the horn but being a poser I did and waited for the abuse that night. When we met there was no comment so I had to ask if I *had* embarrassed him ? Typically he replied with "Oh I didn't notice, we were still in the field eating when you went through", I suppose I deserved that !! Practice Week was difficult with Saturday, Wednesday and the all important Thursday afternoon sessions being cancelled because of the weather. Things looked grim but then the weather changed and Race Week was glorious with some really good races.

Back to the old road works saga. Those lucky Members who will be racing at the Manx will find that the Mountain Mile is new tarmac, the patches from the pre TT repairs have been replaced. Through Bishop's Court they have done a nice surface dressing of chippings so these will all be nicely bedded in for the Manx.

We only have one new member for this session, Scott Richardson from Dunstable. Obviously the Manx period is the best time for new members and, hopefully, our enthusiastic Chairman's new ideas will go down well. I am sure that Jim will say more on that subject.

Don't forget to attend the AGM this year and then as usual at around 1pm we adjourn to the Beer Tent (with no beer) for our "extra" meeting when there is a lot of chat over a cup of tea. That's the time when we here why Joe Bloggs

didn't win his best ever race because of engine trouble ???

See You There
Keith Trubshaw



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Views or News

If you would like to contribute to the next issue
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Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the thirtieth Annual General Meeting of the Manx Grand Prix Riders Association will be held on **Sunday 28th August 2005 in the Hailwood Centre, The Grandstand, Douglas, Isle of Man at 11.00 a.m.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the twenty seventh Annual General Meeting,
3. Matters arising out of the Minutes.
4. Accounts for the year ended 30th June 2005.
5. Secretary's Report.
6. Chairman's Report.
7. Any other business.

Keith Trubshaw

Hon. Secretary

You're say:

Mick Miller

I would like to say that I really enjoyed my TT parade lap this year and also getting out at the Southern Parade on my 1956 Manx. Pity there isn't a full parade lap at the MGP. However, I do enjoy the VMCC runs on closed roads on my BMW R90S – good, but not as exciting as the Manx Norton, it really doesn't sound quite right through Kirk Michael!

Really looking forward to the MGP with the sights and sounds of the Classics. Sincere thanks for the efforts of all of you who make it possible.

Kindest regards,
Mick Miller.

Mick Withers

Many thanks for my first MGPRRA newsletter by email, I must point out to anyone who hasn't yet subscribed to the computer age that the photos on the email version are much better quality than the printed issue - and in colour!

I was also interested to read Keith Trubshaw's article on circuit changes and that the tree with the big "K" has survived! This was my first (and so far only) experience of creating graffiti when in 1975 (or thereabouts) two or three of us at that years MGP decided the "K" was a bit faint so armed with an aerosol of white Dupli-Colour we resprayed it! Guilty as charged!!!!

Mick

Paul Overton

I think that letting past winners back to the MGP would be a retrograde step. I know it already happens for the Classic MGP but since there is no other Classic Race on the Mountain Course I think this is acceptable, however MGP winners can (and should) progress to the TT.

A word of appreciation on "Out of the Mist" - Great - keep up the good work.

Paul Overton - MGP 1958/59 (those WERE the days - none of these sticky tyres and highsidings etc etc etc.)

Andy and Jenny Alexander

Andy first rode the Senior Manx GP in 1972 and finished 44th. The last lap was 'out of the mist'. The weather had seriously deteriorated and he rode the last few miles down from the mountain without changing gear- his hands were just too cold but it was nevertheless a great achievement for him.

In '74 Andy rode a 500 Triumph Daytona in a Rickman

Metisse frame. Due to excessive vibration making bits come loose he was stopped at the pits when he came in to refuel. Some you win and some you lose so to speak. We had a nice holiday anyway.

We went to the Island to watch the first Classic Manx and after a few years of holidays at the MGP he decided to build a pre-unit 500 Triumph in a Rickman Metisse chassis.

In 1987 Andy got an entry for the Classic Race and we all had a great time on the Island. Andy finished a very creditable 20th - a very good result considering he had not ridden the mountain course for 13 years. Myself and our 2 elder sons-Patrick and Jonathan signed on as marshals and the weather was perfect, that was a year to remember!!!

We returned in '98 and all was going well in practice but the coil packed up 100yds after the start so Andy ended up watching the race from the Grandstand.

We have not been back since although it would be nice to visit the Island again.

We have traveled to Linkoping in Sweden every year since 1990 to take part in their Festival weekend at the Motorstadium. Vintage and Classic races, Speedway,

Motorcross, regularity rides and very good company. This year is the 40th anniversary of the Swedish Historic Motorcycle Club and is also our 40th Wedding anniversary. Should be a very special time there. When we went in 1990 it was to go somewhere different to celebrate our 25th

Anniversary, not thinking that the country and its people would have such an influence on us!

It has been motorbike racing that has taken us across Europe for the last 15 years to such places as Circuit Carole-Paris & Croix-en-Ternois in France, Chimay, Jehonville and Mettet in Belgium, Valer in Denmark, Mo-i-Rana near the Artic Circle in Norway and Sweden. It was the Isle of Man that started that traveling bug. We had such special times visiting different places around the Island and have such great memories!

Jenny Alexander

Ernie Pitt

Jim,

Your right '**time does march on**', I realise it is now some 32 years since I rode in the 1973 Junior and Senior races and 30 years since I made a mess of Brandish in the 1975 TT. Whilst I wasn't too seriously hurt in that incident, it brought home to me my fallibility. I had always said that when I fell off through making a mistake I would pack it in and I did.

I fell off in practice for the 1967 Manx as a result of a seized gearbox and in 1975 as a result of going miles to quickly into Brandish - a serious mistake. In between those incidents I had a wonderful time visiting the Island each year, twice in 1973 to do both the Production TT on a Bennet's Trident and the Manx on Monty Buxton's beautiful, Ray Petty prepared, Manx Norton's.

All the best to those that still ride in the Island, to me it was the Mecca of motorcycle racing. Regards, **Ernie Pitt**

I would be happy to receive the newsletter by email to help reduce costs - I enjoy catching up on the news - keep up the good work.

Pete Shillings

Chris Williams

Unfortunately Chris lost his fight against cancer on Monday 20th, June. Chris was aged just 65. A motorcycle enthusiast through out his life, he participated in all disciplines including trials, scrambling and road trials. However, it is for his road racing that Chris will most probably be best remembered. He competed in ten Manx Grand Prix's riding 7R's, Nortons and latterly Suzukis. Living the Welsh side of Chepstow, Chris was good friends with Ray Cowles, Selwyn Griffiths and Malcolm Uphill. He leaves wife Shelia, and children Jackie, Jane, Jo and John.

George Ridgeon

Past President MGPRRA

Frank Whiteway

Suzuki World Record attempt. Monza. August 1968.

The Crooks Suzuki team of four riders was Eddie Crooks, Brian Ball, Hans-George Anscheidt, and me.

The first one occurred near the end of the attempt as we ground through those long and weary hours towards 4.00pm when the 24hrs would be completed. It became fairly obvious that only a mechanical disaster could rob the team of the ultimate prize. Several people, including one of the FIM timekeepers were suggesting that as we were so far ahead of the existing record, it might be wise to back off a little as the final hour approached in order to save the motor. The amazing little twin-cylinder two-stroke had, for the last 23 hours, been totally flat out with the twist-grip hard against the stop!

The team took this suggestion on board and, as it was my turn on the bike, I was told to ease off and bring the revs down 1K below the red line and simply cruise round. I pulled back onto the circuit and settled down for my final stint around the bumpy banked Monza oval full of confidence that we would soon have the record in the bag. However, my confidence was soon shattered when the engine began making some very alarming and very loud knocking sounds. These rattles became so bad that I felt I had no choice but to come into the pit and find out what was might be causing the problem.

There was understandable panic in the camp when they realised I was coming in with suspected mechanical problems and I can safely say that I was more concerned than they were! After discussing the possible causes for a few minutes team leader Eddie Crooks hollered to me "Come on Frank lad - pull your dammed finger out. Get the bloody thing back on the track and wind it up to maximum. The rattling will go away - I think it's only pinking because it's running light". I have to say that I was very reluctant to do this, as I didn't want to melt the motor so near the conclusion of the 24hrs and told Eddie of my concern in no uncertain manner. Eddie had very swift answer. "Get your arse of that seat and put Bally on it - he's only a butcher and won't know any different!". Sure enough, with BAB on board, the lap speeds soon returned to normal and his beaming grin and thumbs up every lap confirmed Ed's decision as correct. An hour or so later the record was ours. The FIM officials who had patiently observed and timed the attempt were absolutely delighted when we completed the record. One of them told me that he had attended 5 or 6 previous attempts all of which had failed so to actually see one through to success made it all very worthwhile. However, the final sting in the tail for this record attempt had yet to come.

Everyone in the team were screaming and laughing and patting each other on the back and generally celebrating the record. Unbeknown to the group, one of the FIM Officials, a quiet and fairly old chap - Swiss by nationality - approached me and quietly whispered in my ear "Ve haff to maeshure ze silinderr capacity ov ze motor before ze World Record can ratified".

In all the excitement of the moment I had completely forgotten about this small but essential requirement. Nevertheless, with a simple two-stroke twin, I felt that his request wouldn't take very long to sort out so the sooner I could get started the better.

I swigged the last of my shampoo and got my tools out and started stripping the top-end. As I was beavering away at the task, I began to think back over the events leading up to the record attempt. Eddy had breezed into the Crooks-Suzuki workshop one morning and announced that Suzuki GB were going to Monza to have a crack at the Standing Start 250cc 24hr World record and they want us to go along and have a crack at the 350 world record at the same time. "They're planning to run their own 250 so we need to get some 1mm oversize pistons for your Production TT bike" he announced. "Get it bored out and with the OS piston fitted that should be enough to bring the engine capacity over 250cc. Oh, and don't take long about it as they're coming to pick it up next week" were the brief instructions I received from my leader - everything was always so simple for Eddie (sorry mate!).

The Suzuki T20 had bore & stroke of 54mm x 54mm giving 247.376cc - the figures after the decimal points being dependent on your version of Pi. The cubic capacity of the motor had to exceed 251cc for the machine to be eligible to compete in the 350 category. I also believe that it is also important to remember that in 1968 the modern-day electronic pocket calculator - a device which we all take for granted these days - had yet to become available so all calculations had to be carried out longhand - usually on the back of a Players fag packet! I had a vague recollection that one of my calculations had given a value of around 253cc and so I felt had felt reasonably confident that the 1mm OS pistons should be OK.

Suddenly I was brought back to the present when the FIM official asked if I would be much longer. I then had a dreadful realisation "Oh my God - what if my sums were wrong - what if the engine is too small" An icy cold sweat started to collect on my brow as I visualised the reaction of everyone in the camp when I broke the news. "Sorry guy's, the FIM bloke has just confirmed that the engine is undersized and the old record still stands - we've been disqualified. Anyone fancy another try next week?"

The next 30mins passed as if in a trance - I was almost suicidal - all I wanted to do was find somewhere to hide. I was certain that the engine would be declared illegal. I could hardly bear to watch as the Official meticulously took the fateful readings with his FIM certified measuring instruments. I can vividly remember his little book of tables showing all the capacities for all the different engine dimensions and how carefully he browsed these columns. Finally, and after what seemed like an eternity, he made the announcement. "Ze siliniderr capacity ees 256.62285cc which ratifies ze record - congratulations to you all" and shook my hand warmly. Those last 30minutes had been the longest and possibly the worst 1/2 hour of my life.

Happy days.

Frank Whiteway

Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria